

## **Remarks at the White House Easter Egg Roll**

*April 1, 2002*

Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are so glad that you came this year, especially given what happened last year: It rained. But today we have beautiful weather, and we hope you have a great time here at the traditional Easter egg roll.

I want to thank all the members of my Cabinet and their family members who are here. I want to thank the children's book authors who are here. And we hope you listen to those who read books to you. We want to encourage you to read a lot. As a matter of fact, we think it's important that you read more than you watch TV.

I want to thank the entertainers who are here. Of course, I want to thank the Easter Bunny. [*Laughter*] We want to thank all the Embassies that are highlighting their spring traditions. I want to thank the volunteers who have worked so hard to make this a successful Easter egg roll.

You know, one of the things that children say to me all the time—they say, "I want to come see your home, Mr. President." I said, "This isn't our home. This is your home, and you're welcome to the yard of your home." We're so glad you're here.

Do you know that since 1878, Presidents have hosted this event. And it is our honor to continue this tradition. The first President who did so was a guy named Rutherford B. Hayes. He decided to have the Easter egg roll here at the White House because the Members of the United States Congress said you couldn't be—they wouldn't want to host the Easter egg roll anymore on the congressional grounds.

Just to show you we don't hold a grudge, we've invited Members of the U.S. Congress here. And you're welcome, and thank you all for coming. [*Laughter*]

I also am really looking forward to starting the Easter egg roll. I want everybody to have a great time here. It is our honor to host you all. And I'd like to end by this simple—this simple statement: May God bless your families, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

## **Remarks Following a Meeting With Governor George E. Pataki and Mayor Michael Bloomberg and an Exchange With Reporters**

*April 1, 2002*

### **Governor's Island Transfer**

**The President.** I have just informed the Governor and the mayor, the Governor of New York and the mayor of New York City, that the Federal Government will transfer Governor's Island to the people of New York. I'll never forget choppering over Governor's Island with George and Rudy Giuliani, Mike Bloomberg's predecessor, and the two leaders talking about what good use Governor's Island could be put to.

Since that time, I've studied the statements of Mayor Bloomberg, who extensively talked about Governor's Island and how to improve Governor's Island and how to make it a center of educational excellence, something dear to George Pataki's heart. I looked at the law, looked at the circumstances, and decided this morning that this was the right thing for the U.S. Government, and it's the right thing for the people of New York.

I appreciate so very much the vision of these two leaders, and I appreciate their heartfelt concern for the citizens of New York City and the region. And so I want to welcome to the Oval Office with this piece of news.

George, why don't you say a few words?

[*At this point, Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** I know you will. Thanks. I'll be glad to answer a few questions.

### **Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority**

**Q.** Mr. President, what specifically would you like for Chairman Arafat to do, what specific action you'd like him to take in the Middle East? And in light of the current situation in Israel, does the Bush doctrine on terrorism not apply in this case?